

Outsourcing Trust

Youth work, minority young people and the hidden politics of access to social rights

What happens when a right is formally available, but someone outside the institution has to make it reachable?

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main presentation: 15 minutes

Why this question stayed with me (two lenses)

A personal and professional starting point — not the whole evidence base.

This did not start as a neat academic topic. It started as a recurring discomfort from practice.

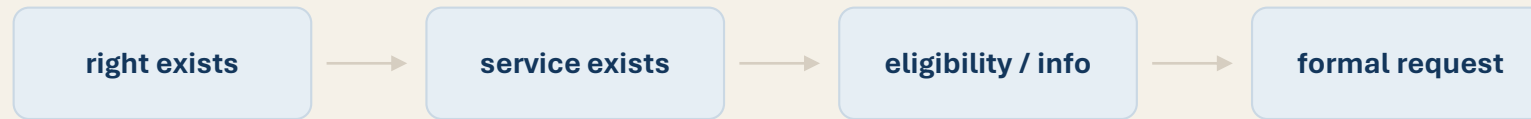


The common thread: access is not only about systems being open. It is also about people feeling able to enter them.

The question before the procedure

Most access debates begin after institutional contact. I start one step earlier.

USUAL ACCESS MODEL



EARLIER ACCESS QUESTION

“Do I trust this institution enough to approach it?”

In this paper, trust means an expectation that engaging with an institution will be understandable, fair, respectful and worth the risk.

My shift

from

formal availability

to

approachability

Access can fail before a system records any request.

How I built the analysis

A practice-informed qualitative inquiry, with clear limits on what the evidence can claim.

This is a practice-informed, interpretive qualitative inquiry — not a new focus-group study.

I use formal qualitative research, facilitated youth-work settings and civic dialogue material as distinct evidence layers, then read across them for recurring access mechanisms.

WHAT THIS IS

- formal qualitative research + facilitated group settings + practice reflection
- comparative reading across inclusion and minority-youth contexts
- an analytical claim about mediated access, not a prevalence claim

WHAT THIS IS NOT

- not newly recruited interviews or formal focus groups for this symposium
- not a Lund case study or one-country comparison
- not a statistical estimate about all minority or marginalised youth

Analytical focus: mediated access encounters — moments where a young person facing structural barriers needs someone outside an institution to make that institution readable, navigable or safe enough to approach.

What counted as evidence

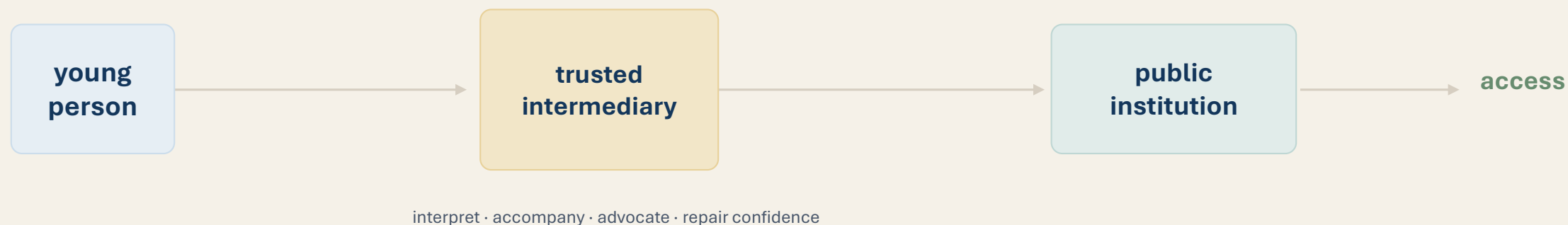
Three evidence layers kept distinct — then read for repeated mechanisms.

EVIDENCE LAYER	WHAT IT REVEALED ABOUT ACCESS	SAFE USE
1 Formal research Romania thesis	Formal inclusion can still depend on dignity, recognition and mediation — not only on official rules.	conceptual root not current youth sample
2 Facilitated youth work with minority youth since 2014 · trainings · workshops	Across trainings, exchanges and reflections, young people repeatedly needed help to decode, prepare, accompany and regain confidence.	practice evidence not formal focus groups
3 Civic dialogue & institutional spaces Bursa Youth Council - ABC Sweden · Roma & Traveller spaces	Trustworthiness and histories with institutions shaped whether people approached at all.	anonymised patterns not individual cases
Safeguard: I do not use informal sessions as invented data; I use recurring, anonymised patterns to build the concept.		

What I call “outsourcing trust”

The concept names where the relational work of access is being carried.

Outsourcing trust: when responsibility for a right remains public, but part of the relational work needed to make that right usable is carried by actors outside the institution.

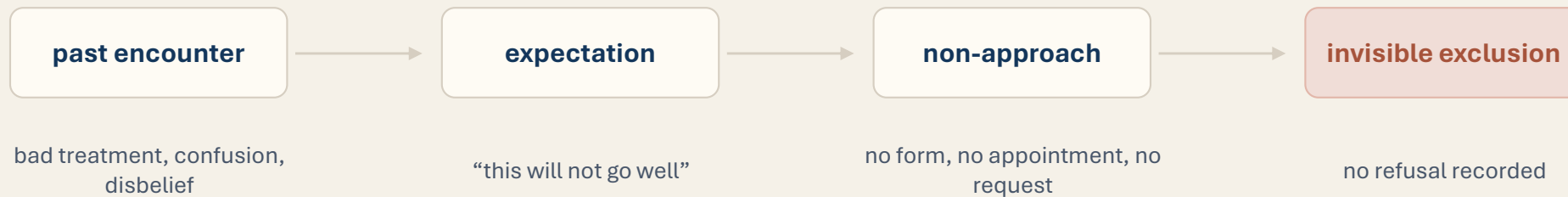


The support is valuable. The dependency is the warning sign.

Pattern 1: exclusion can begin before refusal

Non-use of a service may be a form of discouraged access, not simply lack of interest.

**The institution may record “no application”.
The young person may have experienced “no access”.**

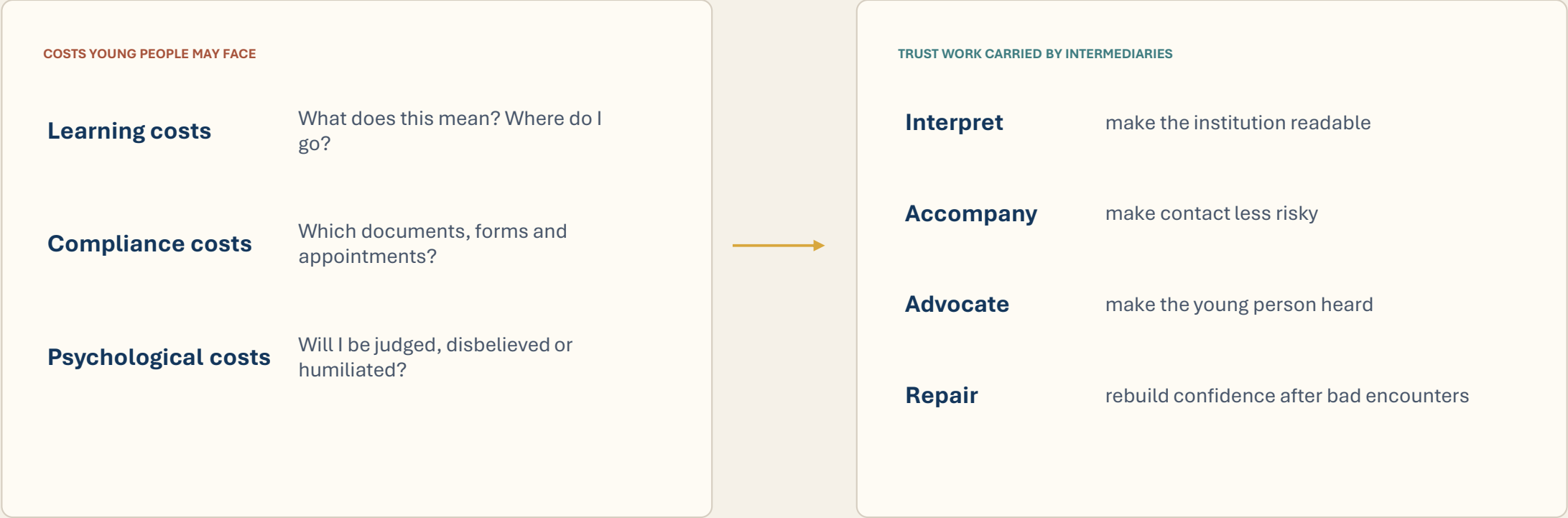


Implication: low uptake or non-engagement should not automatically be read as low need.

Conceptual anchor: administrative burden and non-take-up research help explain how learning, compliance and psychological costs can block access.

Pattern 2: intermediaries become relational infrastructure

They do more than pass on information; they reduce the costs of approaching institutions.

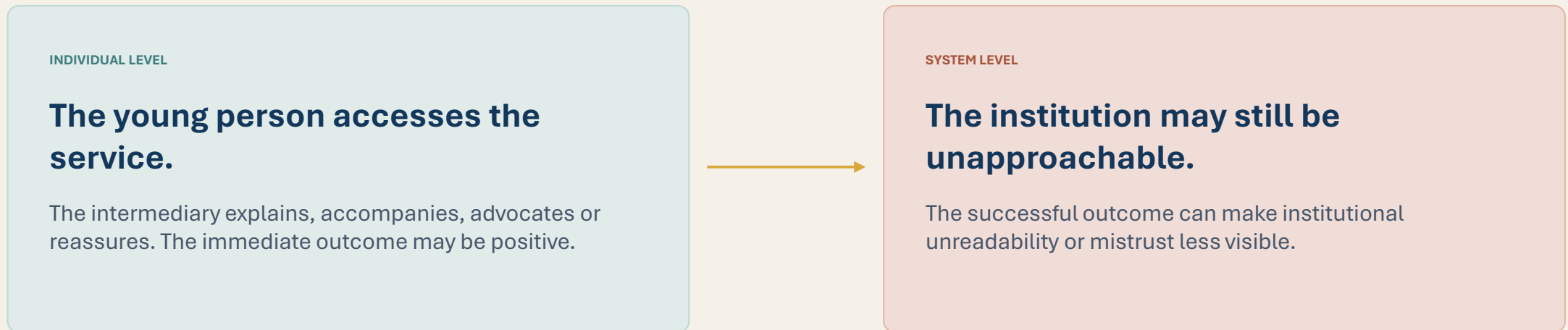


Intermediaries do not only “inform”. They often absorb relational and psychological costs.

Pattern 3: the bridge paradox

A successful bridge can solve the immediate case while hiding the broken road.

The better the bridge works, the easier it can be to overlook why the bridge was needed.



So we must distinguish: successful individual access does not automatically mean accessible institution.

What changes if we take this seriously?

The practical move is from availability to approachability — and from trust to trustworthiness.

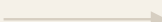
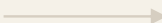
MOVE FROM ASKING

Did we provide information?

Was the service open?

Why are they not engaging?

Can an NGO help them navigate?



TOWARDS ASKING

Could they understand us?

Was the service approachable?

What made engagement risky?

What must the institution learn and change?

Policy implication

Civil society should remain a partner in access — but not a permanent substitute for institutional clarity, dignity and accountability.

Discussion question: when access to a public right depends on a trusted intermediary, what exactly has succeeded?